Amendments to the Claims

The following is a listing of all pending claims. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (original) An order placement management apparatus, comprising:

a first receiving unit arranged to receive a predetermined quotation request from a buyer,

a transmission unit arranged to transmit the quotation request to a transaction management apparatus;

a second receiving unit arranged to receive quotation results generated by suppliers as a function of the predetermined quotation request;

and

a first memory, communicably connected to the second receiving unit, arranged to store the received quotation results as reference prices,

wherein the first and second receiving units are communicably connected to the transmission unit.

2. (original) The order placement management apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a third receiving unit, communicably connected to each of the transmission unit and the first memory, arranged to receive additional reference prices from additional buyers, wherein the first memory additionally stores the additional reference prices as reference prices.

3. (original)   The order placement management apparatus of claim 1, further comprising an order placement unit arranged to receive an order replacement request from a buyer and to

generate order placement data identifying at least a particular supplier, wherein the order

replacement unit is communicably connected to the transmission unit and wherein the generated

order placement data is transmitted by the transmission unit to a transaction management

apparatus.

4. (original)   The order placement management apparatus of claim 1, further comprising

a second memory arranged to store accepted orders as purchase history.

5. (original)   The order placement management apparatus of claim 1, further comprising

a purchase price estimation unit, arranged to receive purchase price estimation requests from a

buyer, communicably connected to each of the first and second memories and further arranged to

estimate a purchase price based upon reference prices stored in the first memory and/or purchase

history stored in the second memory.

6. (original)   The order placement management apparatus of claim 1, further comprising

an order acceptance confirmation unit, communicably connected to each of the transmission unit

and the second memory, arranged to generate a confirmation notice that an order has been

accepted by a supplier.

7. (original)   The order placement management apparatus of claim 1, further comprising

a price information provision unit communicably connected to the first memory and the

transmission unit, arranged to provide prices to other buyers in response to specific requests.

8. (currently amended)   The order placement management apparatus of ~~any of claims 1-7~~

Claim 1, wherein a predetermined quotation request includes a request wherein a buyer can

specify the format and content of quotations to be generated by suppliers in response to the

predetermined quotation request.

9. (original)   An order acceptance management apparatus, comprising:

a database in which information on offered objects is segmented and stored as a plurality of data items;

a first receiving unit arranged to receive a predetermined quotation request from a buyer;

a quotation generation unit, communicably connected to the first receiving unit, arranged to retrieve definition files for an object specified by the quotation request and to generate a quotation result based on said definition files, and

a transmission unit arranged to transmit the quotation results to a transaction management apparatus.

10. (original)   The order acceptance management apparatus of claim 9, further comprising a second receiving unit arranged to receive order placement data from buyers.

11. (original)   The order acceptance management apparatus of claim 9, further comprising a first memory, communicably connected to the quotation generation unit, arranged to store finalized order placements as sales history.

12. (original)   The order acceptance management apparatus of claim 9, further comprising a second memory communicably connected to the quotation generation unit, arranged to store the definition files.

13. (original)   The order acceptance management apparatus of claim 11, wherein said quotation generation unit generates quotation results as a function of the sales history stored in the first memory.

14. (original)   The acceptance management apparatus of claim 10, further comprising a reception unit, communicably connected to each of the first and second receiving units, arranged to receive incoming requests from the transaction management apparatus and route them to one of the first or the second receiving units.

15. (original)   The order acceptance management apparatus of claim 9, wherein a predetermined quotation request includes a quotation request wherein a buyer can specify the format and content of quotations to be generated by suppliers in response to the predetermined quotation request.

16. (original)   A transaction management apparatus, comprising:

a first receiving unit arranged to receive predetermined quotation requests from buyers,

a forwarding recipient determination unit communicably connected to the first receiving unit arranged to select suppliers who could respond to the predetermined quotation requests;

a second receiving unit arranged to receive quotation results from the suppliers and transmit them to requesting buyers; and

a first memory arranged to store data regarding suppliers.

17. (original)   The transaction management apparatus of claim 16, further comprising a third receiving unit, arranged to receive order placement data from buyers and transmit the order placement data to suppliers.

18. (original) The transaction management apparatus of claim 16, further comprising a price information reception unit and a second memory, wherein the price information unit is arranged to receive reference price data and purchase history from a buyer and the second memory is arranged to store said reference price data and purchase history and make said reference price data and purchase history available to order placement management apparatuses.

19. (original)   The transaction management apparatus of claim 16, further comprising an order acceptance confirmation unit arranged to receive an order acceptance confirmation notice from an order acceptance management apparatus and to forward said notice to an order placement management apparatus.

20. (currently amended)   The transaction management apparatus of ~~any of claims 16-19~~ Claim 16, further comprising a transmission and reception unit, arranged to manage all received and transmitted data.

21. (original)   An order acceptance and placement management system, comprising:

one or more order placement management apparatuses;

one or more order acceptance management apparatuses; and

a transaction management apparatus,

wherein each of said order placement management apparatuses and said order acceptance management apparatuses are networked through said transaction management apparatus, and

wherein an order acceptance management apparatus is arranged to receive a predetermined quotation request determined transmitted by a requesting order placement management apparatus, and to generate a quotation result based on a database in which data on offered objects is stored, and

wherein said requesting order placement management apparatus and said transaction management apparatus each accumulate quotation results and purchase history in one or more memories.

22. (original)   The system of claim 21, wherein one or more order placement management apparatus can utilize the quotation results and purchase history accumulated by said transaction management apparatus as reference prices.

23. (currently amended)   The system of ~~any of claims 21-22~~ <u>Claim 21</u>, wherein a predetermined quotation request includes a quotation request wherein a buyer can specify the format and content of quotations to be generated by suppliers in response to the predetermined quotation request.

24. (original)   The system of claim 23, wherein a buyer uses stored quotation results and purchase history to evaluate a quotation result.

25. (original)   The system of claim 23, wherein a buyer uses stored quotation results and purchase history to perform a detailed analysis of market trends and evaluate a potential for negotiating a better quotation result from a supplier.

26. (original)   The system of claim 23, wherein a placement management apparatus, an order acceptance management apparatus or a transaction management apparatus can be implemented in hardware, software, or in any combination thereof.